

What you can do

- volunteer with the Comité for a New Colombia
- join or begin a committee in your area to inform your community about the situation in Colombia and mobilize people to protest Plan Colombia
- organize a teach-in. invite a CNC organizer to speak.

Where You can get More Information

Colombia Report

www.colombiareport.org

Z magazine

www.zmag.org

News Agency New Colombia

www.anncol.com

Colombian Labor Monitor

www.prairienet.org/clm/

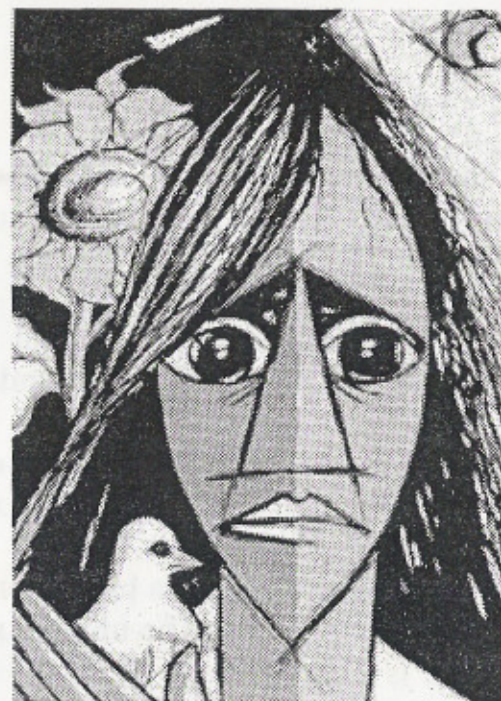
Comité for a New Colombia

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Our Points of Unity

1. We oppose U.S. intervention in Colombia. We are against the use of the U.S. people's money to fund the political, economic, military, and environmental intervention in Colombia.
2. We uphold the right to self determination of the Colombian people as they struggle for peace with economic and social justice.
3. We oppose the chemical and biological methods of crop eradication, mainly fumigation.
4. We denounce the systematic utilization of paramilitary forces by the U.S. backed Colombian state and call for their immediate dismantling.
5. We oppose the attacks on women, indigenous peoples, workers, children, unions, displaced, disappeared, and all the oppressed peoples of Colombia.

The Women of Colombia



The women of Colombia have been violated, their culture and lands have been corrupted and stolen, their voice has been silenced with the most extreme expressions of brutality- by a government that does not represent them. A government that targets those who dare to struggle and fight for their rights.

In Colombia women are not free, they have been oppressed forever. Now when Colombia's war is worsening day by day, women's livelihoods and their rights are being violated in many different ways.

- 56% of the internally displaced (3 million people) are women.
- The only options for the rural women that migrate to the cities are to work as domestic workers, as "mulas" for the drug dealers, or as prostitutes.
- The only option for the women that migrate to other rural zones is to find a husband because building materials, which are given for the construction of a temporary shelter, are given only to men.
- Poor women in Colombia have more difficulty finding a job. The unemployment rate is 27% (in some places it reaches 50%). Men are given first preference in the job market, and therefore more jobs are given to men, than to women.
- There are 8 cases of domestic violence every hour. The frequency of these cases increases in communities of ethnic minorities and poor peoples. The women in these communities are thus even more oppressed.

• Rape is one of the most common ways in which women are harassed in times of war. Sexual violence is often used in order to reach guerrillas or revenge communities affiliated with the leftist struggle.

• The lack of statistics and research with a gender perspective is an obstacle to revealing the real situation of women in Colombia.

In a society where women are the main caretakers and are not expected to fight or work outside the home, women suffer the consequences of having their families ripped apart in different ways. During the war, they have to assimilate the early death of the ones they love, their husbands or partners, their daughters and sons, their brothers and sisters. Moreover they have to approach new roles as widows, mothers, orphans, etc., in the midst of this unjust society and with the presence of an illegitimate government that doesn't represent them.

During the war, women also have the potential to play an important role. They have become a strong force in the struggle, because a radical change is necessary for their survival - because at this moment they don't have anything else to lose. All their rights have been violated, their culture and lands have been corrupted and stolen, their voice has been silenced with the most extreme expressions of brutality. In actuality the government supervises the

actions of the paramilitary forces of Colombia. The paramilitaries have harassed, threaten, and targeted the women who dare to organize. For example Ruta Pacífica de Mujeres and La Organización Femenina Popular, two women's groups that are a winning force with support from the people, are under attack for their work. This past August 15th 2001, the paramilitaries blocked a march that these groups held in Barrancabermeja-Colombia. The media has paid no attention to their plight and the government has followed its normal code of intransigence- these women's protests remain shrouded in silence, along with so many others.

Even though women in Colombia have been stopped in many different ways, they continue to organize, mobilize and make connections with different struggles.

It is vital to support the women of Colombia because they are building, creating, and generating changes with immense courage. And if the aim is to move forward towards a complete liberation, women should be able to fight for the respect of their lives, their rights and their voices in order to achieve their freedom.